

is being imperiled by the unwillingness of the State of South Carolina to reach an agreement with the Department of Energy on taking shipment of the plutonium identified for disposition and building the required facilities.

It is appropriate for the Governor of South Carolina to insist on every assurance that his State will be treated fairly, and will not simply become the permanent storage site for unwanted nuclear material if for some reason the plutonium agreement should fall apart.

But the Governor has done that, he has succeeded, he has won. He should be congratulated.

The Governor has gotten the Secretary of Energy to provide South Carolina all of the assurances they never got from the Clinton administration, including full funding for the MOX program, a strict construction schedule, and a number of mechanisms, including statutory language and other measures, to ensure that the agreement will be legally enforceable.

However, the Governor is apparently insisting that this matter should be thrown to the courts and resolved through the mechanism of a court ordered consent decree. Putting the courts in charge of executive branch non-proliferation and foreign policy affairs will slow our ability to meet our goals of reducing Russian nuclear material stockpiles, and will allow others who are opposed to the program's goals have a voice in their implementation. Ultimately, I fear America's national security will be undermined.

Further delay in reaching agreement with South Carolina will undermine the United States/Russian plutonium disposition agreement. We must move forward with the construction of the MOX plant that will be used to dispose of the plutonium at issue in order to honor our commitments to the Russian Federation. That will be very difficult, if not impossible, in the face of litigation from the Governor of the State where the plant will be located.

The Russians will not go along to reduce their plutonium inventory unless we do. A failure in this program means more material may end up on the black market where terrorists could have access to it.

For 50 years now the State of South Carolina, like my home State of New Mexico, has hosted some of the most important facilities within our nuclear weapons complex. For 50 years, tens of thousands of the sons and daughters of South Carolina proudly toiled in relative anonymity so that the rest of the country, and the world, could enjoy the peace provided by our nuclear shield during the long, dark days of the Cold War. I am proud of the citizens of South Carolina and their unique service for our country.

Today, the children and grandchildren of the previous generations of South Carolina heroes have a tremendous opportunity to almost literally, as the prophet Isaiah said, "beat their swords into plowshares and their

spears into pruning hooks." They stand on the cusp of a grand new opportunity to lead the world community in converting nuclear weapons to electric power while at the same time keeping the material out of the hands of would be terrorists.

We must go forward with this important agreement. Thus, I will close today by urging both the Secretary of Energy and the Governor of South Carolina to work together to resolve their differences, move out together, and not threaten this effort by resorting to litigation.●

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, as a strong supporter of Federal programs to strengthen and protect libraries, I am pleased to recognize April 14–20 as National Library Week. This is the 44th anniversary of this national observance and its longevity is evidence of the great importance our Nation places on libraries, books, reading and education.

National Library Week grew out of 1950's research that showed a troublesome trend—Americans were spending more money on radios and television and less on buying books. The American Library Association and the American Book Publishers joined forces and introduced the first National Library Week in 1958 in an effort to encourage people to read and to use their libraries.

When the free public library came into its own in this country in the 19th century, it was, from the beginning, a unique institution because of its commitment to the principle of a free and open exchange of ideas, much like the Constitution itself. Libraries continue to be an integral part of all that our country embodies: freedom of information, an educated citizenry, and an open and enlightened society.

I firmly believe libraries play an indispensable role in our communities. They promote reading and quench a thirst for knowledge among adults, adolescents, and children. More importantly, they provide the access and resources to allow citizens to obtain timely and reliable information that is so necessary in our fast-paced society. In this age of rapid technological advancement, libraries are called upon to provide not only books and periodicals, but many other valuable resources as well audio-visual materials, computer services, Internet access terminals, facilities for community lectures and performances, tapes, records, video-cassettes, and works of art for exhibit and loan to the public.

Libraries provide a gateway to a new and exciting world for all the place where a spark is often struck for disadvantaged citizens who for whatever reason have not had exposure to the vast stores of knowledge and emerging technology available to others. In this information age, they play a critical role in bridging the digital divide.

Many families cannot afford personal computers at home, yet the role of computers has become almost necessary to a basic educational experience. The children of these families would suffer without the access to emerging technology that libraries provide to all patrons regardless of income. In addition, special facilities libraries provide services for older Americans, people with disabilities, and hospitalized citizens.

During National Library Week, I wish to salute those individuals who are members of the library community and work so hard to ensure that our citizens and communities continue to enjoy the tremendous rewards available through our libraries. Library staff, volunteers and patrons work to ensure existing libraries run smoothly and have adequate resources, as well as advocate for increased funding and new libraries.

I am proud that Maryland is a State of readers. Recent statistics show that Maryland citizens borrowed more public library materials per person than those of almost any other State, nearly 9 per person. In addition, 67 percent of the State's population are registered library patrons. We are lucky to have 24 public library systems, providing a full range of library services to all Maryland citizens and a long tradition of open and unrestricted sharing of resources. The State Library Network that provides interlibrary loans to the State's public, academic, special libraries and school library media centers has enhanced this policy. Marylanders have responded to this outstanding service by showing their continued enthusiasm and support for our public libraries. I have worked closely with members of the Maryland Library Association, colleges and universities and others involved in the library community throughout the State, and I am very pleased to join with them and citizens throughout the Nation in this week's celebration of "National Library Week." I look forward to continuing this relationship with those who enable libraries to provide the unique and vital services available to all Americans.●

#### PASSAGE OF THE HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET AMENDMENTS OF 2001 (S. 1533)

● Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, almost 39 million Americans wake up each morning, hoping that they or their families do not face illness or a serious accident—because they have no health insurance. Many more are underinsured and do not have access to a good health provider. They awake hoping that they and their loved ones will not get sick. For many, falling ill can mean financial ruin, or even death, because they cannot afford the critical health services they need.

During this time when our country struggles through the worst economic downturn in a decade, we must find innovative ways to provide access to